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tion that members of a family are always ready to give each other. Relatives are inclined to exchange presents chiefly among themselves, but there is a constant giving and receiving among all of the people of the village of Hanga-roa.

THE LIFE CYCLE

Birth

Children are always welcomed into a family and the rapid increase of the Easter Island population in the last fifty years indicates the fertility of most of the married couples. There are now 216 children under 13 years of age. I never heard of a woman who was annoyed at the prospect of having a child or of a woman who had an abortion. The desire for children is illustrated by the following popular Easter Island tale, which was given to me as an actual recent incident:

> A woman named Rere-ao slept with her husband but saw that she would never have a child. One day she noticed a woman who was pregnant. She pretended to be pregnant too. She also pretended to suffer when the pregnant woman felt the first pains of labor. The other woman gave birth to a child. Rere-ao said to the midwives, "You stay here. I must go out to defecate." She went to the house of the woman to whom the child had been born. She said, "Give me this child. I want to suckle it." The woman passed the child to her and she stole it. She put it in front between her tapa skirt and her waist. Then she returned to her house and said to the women sitting there, "Hurry and take my child." They came to deliver the child and it was born from the front part of her bosom. The real parents looked for their child who had been stolen by Rere-ao. They came to the house of Rere-ao and said, "The child is ours. Why did you steal him?" Then they said to the people, "She only pretended to have a child and for that reason she has taken our child. She is Rere-ao, stealer of the child." The parents took their child back, and thereafter the people made fun of Rere-ao and called her Rere-ao-toki-poki (Rere-ao-the-stealer-of-the-child).

The present islanders do not care whether they have sons or daughters. Formerly sons were preferred, as in many parts of Polynesia. "The son has to carry on the line, succeed to the title and inherit the estate" (31, p. 37). Father Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 131) writes:

> . . . If the newborn child was a boy, there was great rejoicing, but if it was a daughter there was less enthusiasm. All of the affection of the family was bestowed upon the first born son, whereas the last one was despised; he bore a nickname that nobody pronounced without laughing.

Pregnancy

At the third or fifth month of pregnancy, but never in the fourth or later than the fifth month, the husband's father offered an earth oven to the parents of the expectant mother. This oven was called *umu takapu moa kokoma* (*takapu*, ceremonial earth oven; *moa kokoma*, intestines of the fowls) and was "proportioned to the number of sweet potatoes or fowls they had at their disposal" (230, vol. 6, p. 130). The food cooked in it was presented with the words, "Umu takapu moa ka kai" (Eat the earth oven of fowl's intestines), and eaten on the spot. The name of this feast was *rae* (the first fruits, the

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843 431 firstlings), and was perpetuated long after the natives were converted to Christianity. After the food was removed, the pit of the oven was carefully filled in so that no rats could get into it, for if any food scraps were taken by a rat, the child would die. The father of the pregnant woman could make an earth oven and present it to the husband's relatives, but this gift had no ceremonial value.

DELIVERY

844 Before delivery a black stone was heated in an open fire, wrapped in bulrushes, and put under the parturient. This practice was supposed to stimulate labor pains (121, pp. 659-660). My informants did not give any information about this custom.

A woman in labor delivers in a squatting position. She kneels on the floor, reclining against her husband, who assumes the same position behind her. The husband or some other person assists the parturient by holding her under her armpits and massaging her stomach with both hands crossed on the navel region. Relatives and friends gather in the house to comfort the woman.

At the moment of delivery the man who ties the navel cord (*tangata hahau pito*) is called in. The tying of the navel cord is sacred and must be performed according to ritual (pp. 64-65). At the present time only five persons on the island know how to bind the navel; they are Juan Tepano, Mateo Beriberi, Timoteo Pakarati, Santiago Pakarati, and Leon Rahoroa. The first knot (*hahau o te matau*, string of the right) is tied after the string has made transverse turns around the navel cord passing from left to right. After three more transverse turns passing from right to left, the second knot (*hahau patu maui*, string of the left) is tied. These knots keep the child's strength in his body. The navel cord is cut by a boy or girl (*kope* or *vie nagi pito*, young man or woman who bites the navel), who cuts with the teeth or an [465] obsidian knife—formerly they preferred to bite it. The cord cutter was paid with fowls and sweet potatoes. Sometimes he received a young cock which he could not kill lest the strength of the new-born child be destroyed. He could give the cock to a foreigner, but usually it was allowed to die with age. [787] Generally the cord cutter must tell what he dreamed the night before. If he saw cows or stars it was a favorable sign for the child. Anything related to the skies was a good sign, but falling stars or any falling thing was believed [845] to portend ill-luck. Modern Easter Islanders retain this belief in the significance of omens. The word *topa-tini* is used for children that are born by breech presentation.

846 Most ceremonial customs dealing with disposal of the umbilical cord have become obsolete. In ancient times the wound was smeared with red ocher (*kica*) from a place called Te Tiamo, near Poike. Sometimes the umbilical cord and placenta were put into a calabash and taken to the shore by the